

Communication Principles from Mr. Box

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1. **Skill** - Communication is a skill and can be practiced.
2. **Noise** - Noise is not necessarily music. Talking is not necessarily communicating.
3. **Climate** - It is important to create a warm, accepting climate.
4. **Distance** - Distance or closeness is a factor, both psychologically and physically.
5. **Walls** - You cannot break down walls, they have to be taken down from within. People can always out-withdraw you.
6. **Degrees of Openness** - People have varying degrees of openness and choose their degree of openness.
7. **Transparency** - The more open we are, the more people can see what we hold inside.
8. **Being Closed** - We should match our openness with the interpersonal climate. Being "closed" is not necessarily bad.
9. **Open Side** - Approach them from their open side or open topics.
10. **Timing** - is an important element, when to find them open. Watch for "Teaching Moments" or opportunities to talk and listen.
11. **Time** - It is important that we make time or a time to communicate.
12. **Understood** - As important as it is to understand them, it is even more important that they "feel understood".
13. **Initiate** - Take responsibility for your side of the communication. Get off your seat and start the conversation.
14. **Preparation** - Sometimes it helps to prepare ahead what you want to say, but you also need to give the other person time to prepare a response.
15. **Intent to Hurt** - People will withdraw if they sense you are there to criticize or hurt them.
16. **Rational Control** - Our rational control effects the quality of our verbal communications.
17. **Reflective Listening** - Reflecting what was said insures an accurate understanding.
18. **Shotgun Approach** - It's better to discuss one topic at a time.
19. **Third Person** - Sometimes a third person can be useful in reaching the other person, but you have to be careful what is communicated.
20. **Too Big** - Trying to communicate too big of a concept is ineffective

THE MARITAL DANCE

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The Marital Dance is designed to illustrate interpersonal relationship patterns. The Marital Dance helps to recognize functional and dysfunctional patterns for relationships inside the family as well as for outside personal relationships. This handout is designed to support the Marital Dance Presentation and to summarize the key concepts from the presentation.

LOVE SEAT

It is basically constructive and where relationships are nurtured and developed.
Consists of companionship, friendship, sharing, caring, support and pursued.
The Love Seat is a caring place to negotiate differences and solve problems.
The key is to seek to *protect and preserve* the relationship and *solve* the problems.
If you don't reserve time and opportunities for this seat, it tends to get the "left-overs."
Boundaries may have to be established to enable and protect Love Seat time.
Spouses can differ on the amount of Love Seat time they seek or need.

CONFRONTATION SEAT

The Confrontation Seat is basically destructive and relationships tend to be damaged.
(The best place to deal with differences is in the Love Seat)
The Confrontation Seat is oppositional and based upon punishment and counter punishment.
"Porcupines Live Alone" and though you "win the battle" over time you "lose the war".
It consists of criticism, manipulation, control, punishment, verbal and even physical abuse.
Some spouses are very quick to confront, criticize, argue, and impose their will.
Under "threat" we tend to "Fight" or "Flight". We tend to escalate the conflict or withdraw.
Here is a feeling of hostility, anger and being "in-trouble".

DISTRACTION SEAT

Distractions are things we like to do or have to do, and may compete with Love Seat time.
Distractions are acceptable, even desirable, but must be managed and orchestrated.
We manage distractions to keep them in balance and to preserve time for the Love Seat.
We have to orchestrate distractions so we can both arrive at the Love Seat opportunities.
I can support your distractions if you also seek me and we have enough Love Seat time.
I may feel "secondary" if your distractions are more valued or important than me.
Sometimes, we can do our distractions together and enjoy companionship or Love Seat time.
(In quality Love Seat time, the relationship has primacy over the activity.)
"Life" according to Dr. Chatelain, is doing the things we like to do and have to do ...
while spending enough Love Seat time to keep the relationship vital.

WITHDRAWAL SEAT

It is basically relationship destructive, even more so than Confrontation Seat.
If the Confrontation Seat is "active" conflict, the Withdrawal Seat is "passive" conflict.
I Withdraw to pout, play "poor me", be a "victim", let you know that I am unhappy, or withdraw to "test" the relationship and elicit your pursuit. You pay off my pouting by rescuing.
During Withdrawals, we think very fast and rapidly build negative thoughts.
We are vulnerable to outside relationships where others care about us and understand us.
Sometimes, we "compete to care least" and fall into emotional "stand-offs."
Over time, it may take longer and longer for us to get out the withdrawals.